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Former District Man Sentenced to Seven-Year Prison Term On Charges of Identity Theft and Theft

- Defendant Stole Maryland Woman's Identity, Got Phone Service in Her Name -

WASHINGTON - James T. Dillard, 33, formerly of Washington, D.C., was sentenced today to a seven-year prison term for obtaining and using the identity of a Maryland woman to establish cellular phone service and for the theft of phone services from Sprint, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

The Honorable Herbert B. Dixon, Jr. imposed the sentence. Dillard was convicted by a jury in September 2010 of first-degree identity theft and first-degree theft, following a two-week trial. The same jury was unable to reach a unanimous verdict on other charges in the case, including allegations of first degree sexual abuse.

In addition to imposing a period of incarceration of seven years, Judge Dixon ordered the defendant to serve a five-year period of supervised release upon completion of his prison term and to pay restitution to Sprint. Dillard also was ordered to pay court costs of \$3,000.

According to the government's evidence at trial, on or about January 25, 2004, the defendant used the victim's name, address, date of birth and Social Security number to open a cellular account with Sprint. It remains a mystery how Dillard obtained the victim's personal information; the victim did not know the defendant. In fact, at the time of the offense, the victim resided in Maryland and had no connection to the District of Columbia, where Dillard resided.

The evidence established that for a period of approximately six months, Dillard was actively using the phone that he had established in the victim's name. He initially had the bills routed to an address that was approximately eight doors from his residence on Randolph Place NW. Eventually, he had the bills re-routed to a vacant house two doors from his residence.

Records showed that when the bills went unpaid, Sprint sent a delinquency notice to the phone, explaining that the bill was delinquent and that service may be terminated. In response,

Dillard would call Sprint, and, to prevent termination of service, he would provide bank and/or credit card numbers by phone. Although that would temporarily keep his service active, eventually those payments would come back as unauthorized, and another delinquency notice would be sent to the phone. This process continued for a period of approximately six months, until Sprint terminated the account in June of 2004, and sent it for collection. In total, the defendant stole in excess of \$1,700 in services from Sprint.

The victim, who was unaware to this point that her identity had been stolen, received a collection notice in 2006 from Sprint. After contesting the charges, Sprint determined that the account had been fraudulently opened. Sprint never recovered its losses.

In 2009, while investigating an unclosed sexual assault case from 2004, investigators in the District linked the defendant to the 2004 identity theft. Both allegations were tried together following the defendant's indictment in 2010. However, the jury was unable to reach a unanimous verdict on the sexual assault allegations.

At today's sentencing, Judge Dixon emphasized Dillard's past record, which includes seven prior convictions. They include two prior felonies, a prior theft conviction, and a federal conviction for access device fraud. Because of his two prior felony convictions, Dillard was eligible for a sentencing enhancement, which increased the maximum penalty from 10 to 30 years on each count.

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Machen praised those who worked on the case from the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), including Detectives Ingrid Harkins, Wallace Carmichael, Wanda Fields and Lisa Williams; Sgt. Ronald Reid, and Evidence Technician Jay Gregory. U.S. Attorney Machen also recognized the outstanding work of Victim Advocate Maria Shumar, Victim Service Coordinators LaJune Thames and Katina Adams, Paralegal Specialist Cynthia Muhammad, Legal Assistant Charmonique Price, and the entire Litigation Technology Support Unit. Finally, he commended the hard work of Assistant U.S. Attorneys David M. Rubenstein, Amy Zubrensky and Heide Herrmann, who investigated and prosecuted the case.

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